ted to consider providing inputs like coal and fertilizers to farmers on soft terms.

(9) The Tobacco Board has re fixed the price differential of Mini mum Support Prices Sor grades other than the basis grades of F2 and L2.

(10) The cigarette manufacturers have been requested to activiate their purchases of tobacco.

Ethnic problem of Sri Lanka

*87. SHRI T. R. BALU;
SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) what were the reasons for suspending the good offices of India to find a solution for the ethnic problem of Tamils in Sri Lanka; and

(b) whether any steps have been taken by the Government of India to express their concern over the miseries of Tamils in Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI NARAYAN DATT TIWARI): (a) The large scale military operations and the imposition of an economic and communications blockade affecting Tamil civilians in Jaffana peninsula led to India suspending its good offices. This was conveyed in a message from PM to Jre-sident Jayewardene on 10-2-1987.

(b) Government have continuously expressed their grave concern during the process of rendering good offices, through diplomatic channels, and in Parliament.

88 [*Transferred to the* 27th *April,* 19871.

Forest Cover for maintaining Ecological Balance

*89. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: DR. R. K. PODDAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the minimum forest cover needed in the country for maintaining ecological balance; and

(b) what is the forest cover in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pra˜desh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Assam and Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) According to the National Forest Policy of 1952, the country as a whole should aim at maintaining one third of its total land area under forest for proper ecological balance.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The extent of forest cover as estimated by the National Remote Sensing Agency for the concerned states is given below:

Area under forest cover (1980-82)	(lakhs ha.)
States	
Punjab	0-499
Haryana	0-401
Himachal Pradesh	9-130
Rajasthan	5-972
Madbya Pradesh	90-215
Bihar	20-139

under (1930-82)	fores t	cover	(lahs ba.)
Orissa			39-425
Assam			*19 796*
Gujarat			5 057

Simplification of Rules in granting Permission to open a Hotel

*90. SHRI KAILASH PATI MISHRA: SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA:

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state;

(a) what steps Government have taken during the Sixth Plan period and thereafter to encourage opening of new hotels in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that for opening a hotel about 43 clearances have to be obtained from about 25 different authorities;

(c) whether his Ministry proposes to simplify the process of clearances by the authorities concerned; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MIINISTER OF TOURISM (MUFTI MOHD. SAYEED): (a) Steps to encourage opening of new hotels in the country are under constant consideration in the Ministry of Tourism in consultation with the other concerned authorities. At present, several incentives/concessions are available to the hotel industry. These include exemption from the MRTP Act in the matter of both new projects and expansion of existing hotels; income tax holiday to new hotels; higher depreciation allowance; central subsidy for construction of new hotels in specified • backward areas; interest subsidy on hotel loans advanced by IFCI; Foreign Exchange Incentive quota for overseas advertising/publicity, promotional tours, imports of provisions, equipment including vehicles (up to two in a year); concessional customs duty on a number of items imported by hotels for actual use; priority in the allotment of telephone/telex connections, etc. Besides, some of the State Governments have also accorded hotels/tourism the status of an industry, which entitles hotels to such concessions/incentives as are available to other industries in the respective States.

(b) Excepting statutory approvals like approval of building plans by the local municipal authorities, registration under The SARAIS Act, etc. clearances required for opening a hotel vary according to the extent of facilities planned.

(c) and (d) Different approvals/ sanctions are required at different stages involving different Government authorities, both Central and State. Applications for these approvals/sanctions are considered by the concerned authorities in accordance with their prescribed guidelines.

अंदमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह में मुक्त पत्तन

*91. श्री राम चन्द्र विकल :
श्री वी० नारायणसामी :

क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री 4 मार्च, 1986 को राज्य सभा में अतारांकित प्रश्न 924 के दिए गए उत्तर को देखेंगे और यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या सरकार ने अंदमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह में एक मुक्त पत्तन स्थापित करने का कोई निर्णय ले लिया है ; और

(ख) यदि हां, तो कब और यदि नहीं, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं ?